also very good. *Procellaria capensis*—the Cape Pigeon—was a summer visitor only, but was found in great numbers, hatching in little holes under the turf. This bird was so persecuted by a kind of gull that it only left its nest after dark. Another specimen of Procellaria also visited the island in the summer. It was named "Equinoxalis." There was only one kind of duck, and this became very scarce through shooting. The number of cormorants was very small, while the albatross (Diomedea) remained during the summer only, when it made its nest hanging from the rocks. They had magnificent brown feathers. Of the white albatross only two specimens were seen, but the white Dominican gull was common. Some few of the *Chionis alba*—the Antarctic Pigeon—which were eaten, remained during the whole year, as well as a singing-bird of the size of a lark.

The insects found were few, viz. only a species of land-beetle without wings, about one centimetre long, resembling the common German *Lauf-käfer*, and a water-beetle of the same size. A kind of red spider was caught under big stones. Of lower maritime invertebrates a good collection was made, which has, however, not yet been classified. The greatest part of this was, however, obtained when the tide was out and no boat was necessary, and the dredging was unsatisfactory.

In the summer two species of fish were caught in calm weather, varying from 5 to 20 cm. in length. But none were caught during the winter. The Expedition collected only about forty species of land and water plants, among the former of which were several varieties of the Tussack grass, two kinds of moss, two kinds of fern, and a little shrub with leaves and red blossoms. The grass was ravenously consumed by the cattle and the goats, but the sheep preferred this little shrub. Dr. Will is under the impression that he has discovered some new varieties.

The transit of Venus was seen in perfect weather, although a severe storm raged at the time. The ingress and egress were clearly observed, as well as the progress over the sun's disk, but no photographs were taken, as the Expedition was not furnished with suitable apparatus.

The island possessed, in spite of its desolateness, a beautiful Alpine nature, the tranquillity of which was only broken by the constant thunder of avalanches. The dwelling-house was comfortable, although it would have been more so if each member had had a separate room instead of its being shared with another. The provisions furnished to the Expedition left, however, much to be desired. The tinned Australian meat was tasteless, and the vegetables bad. The milk (in tins) only lasted six months, while the salt meat and fish, although good, were not sufficient. No fresh potatoes were furnished, the claret was bad, and the beer was soon consumed. The cook did wonders, however, in the way of culinary achievements. There was no case of scurvy, neither any serious case of illness. Some experiments were made during the summer to cultivate beans, peas, and potatoes, but they failed, as the shoots were destroyed by cold as soon as above the ground.

The Expedition left the island on September 5, 1883, in the German corvette *Marie*, but all the houses were left intact.

Four of the members of the Expedition returned home, but Dr. Vogel spent a couple of months in travelling in the Argentine Republic, while Messrs. Will and Claus are negotiating with the Argentine Government about taking the command of an expedition for exploring the course of the River Pilcomayo, in which the celebrated explorer Creveaux lost his life. Should their negotiations fail, these gentlemen intend to undertake a journey to the Brazilian province of Matto Grosso, and thence make an exploration of Central Bolivia (Santa Cruz de la Sierra), and eventually follow the watercourses of Mamore and Madeira into the Amazon River, and then the latter to its mouth.

ALLEN THOMSON

BORN in Edinburgh, April 2, 1809, Allen Thomson had nearly completed his seventy-fifth year when he died on the evening of Friday last, March 21. He was the son of John Thomson, a distinguished physician, who was the first occupant of the Chairs of Military Surgery and of Pathology in the University of Edinburgh, and it is remarkable that both chairs were founded on his own recommendation. Allen Thomson graduated as M.D. at the University of Edinburgh in 1830, and in 1831 he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. Soon after graduation he became an extra-mural Lecturer on Anatomy along with William Sharpey. The atmosphere of the Edinburgh school at this time was highly charged. A number of men, afterwards famous, were either students or extra-mural teachers. It is sufficient to mention the names of John Reid, John Goodsir, Martin Barry, Edward Forbes, William B. Carpenter, and John Hughes Bennett. All of these became distinguished in biological science, and amongst them in these days there was the clash of intellect and the rivalry of a noble ambition. None of these remain except Dr. Carpenter, who must feel that the death of his friend Allen Thomson is the severance of another link connecting him with what was undoubtedly a brilliant epoch in the history of the Edinburgh medical school.

Dr. Thomson filled the Chair of Anatomy in Marischal College, Aberdeen, from 1839 to 1841, when he was appointed to the Chair of Physiology in Edinburgh. He held this office for six years, when he was transplanted to the Anatomical Chair in the University of Glasgow, which he occupied till 1877. Since then he has resided in London. Of his scientific honours it is unnecessary to say more than that they came without stint; but probably the crowning honour of this kind was when he filled the Presidential Chair of the British Association at the Plymouth meeting in 1877.

Allen Thomson had a double career to a greater extent than most scientific men. He was not merely, by his own researches and by his well-known exhaustless stores of knowledge, one of the leading living authorities in the department of embryology, but he was an eminent public man, interested and influential in many matters of social and scientific politics. In Glasgow for many years he rendered the city and the University invaluable service. By his energy and tact he contributed more than probably any other man to the great work of building the new University on Gilmore Hill.

But with all his public work he was a busy man in his own department. His early work brought him reputation as an embryologist, and he kept it up by many important papers in the same department of science. In addition he wrote on physiological optics, especially on the mechanism of accommodation, and on the sensibility of the skin. His writings were not characterised so much by brilliant originality as by facility of interpretation of the writings of others, and by a running commentary of his own, showing that he had repeated the observations he was narrating with the effect of adding a few facts here and cutting out what he believed to be erroneous there. His method of thought and literary style were both severe. He was always sceptical until convinced, and he strove to get from himself and from others accuracy in detail. Hence he was inclined to be severe on new discoveries or theories, and whilst ready to listen was rather apt to quench the enthusiasm of a tyro by a douche of cold praise. But still his mind was open and receptive, and in not a few instances he changed his opinions under pressure of argument, which cannot be always asserted even of scientific men. Dr. Thomson always had a greater interest in embryological science than in any other department of biology, and none hailed with more delight the rise of the modern British school, nor

deplored more deeply the loss of its leader, F. M. Balfour. As an embryologist his fame will depend chiefly on the clear interpretation he gave to some of the descriptions of the German school, and to the application he made of these to human embryology. An adept with his pencil as with his pen, he gave expression to his views in diagrams that probably for many a day will help the bewildered reader. Thus, though his name will not be associated with any one great discovery, Dr. Thomson will be recognised as a potent force in biological science during this century. His own work, his judicious criticisms, his personal influence, his encouragement to workers, all had an important part in moulding the present state of scientific thought on biological questions.

As to the man himself, those who knew him can testify to the kindly courtesy, to the simplicity of address, to the indescribable charm of his manner, to the warmth of his friendship. He was wise in counsel and adroit in reconciling differences amongst men. To this he owed much of his social power. His finely-moulded and venerable face will be much missed, but not more so than his wise advice at the council board or to the young man who has chosen a scientific career. JOHN G. MCKENDRICK

QUINTINO SELLA

BY the death of Signor Quintino Sella, to which we briefly referred last week, Italian science loses one of her strongest supporters and most earnest students. Although some of the best years of his life were devoted to statesmanship, his early writings on mineralogy were of sufficient solidity to establish for their author a very high reputation. These mineralogical memoirs, contributed chiefly to the Royal Academy of Sciences of Turin, were distinguished by a profound knowledge of crystallography. When the Geological Survey of Italy was about to be established, Signor Sella was commissioned to visit most of the European countries where Surveys were in operation, and in 1861 he presented to Signor Cordova, then Minister of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce, a valuable report, "Sul Modo di fare la Carta Geologica del Regno d'Italia." In collecting materials for that report he spent some time in this country, and took the warmest interest in the work of the Geological Survey. Ten years later he prepared an elaborate report on the mineral wealth of Sardinia. When the International Geological Congress was held at Bologna in 1881, Signor Sella, as one of the most representative scientific men in Italy, was selected to act as the president; and those who had the advantage of attending that meeting carried away with them the most pleasant recollections of his courtesy. Signor Sella died at Biella in Piedmont on the 14th inst.

We direct attention to the letter from Prof. Hughes in connection with a memorial to the Italian *savant*.

NOTES

AT the final meeting, on Saturday last, of the General Committee of the International Fisheries Exhibition, the balance of the funds was disposed of. The surplus amounts to over 15,000*l*., and of this 10,000*l*. were allotted to alleviate the distress of widows and orphans of sea fishermen, while 3000*l*. were voted as an endowment to a society which is to be called "The Royal Fisheries Society," whose functions will be somewhat similar to those of the Royal Agricultural Society; the remaining 2000*l*. are kept in reserve.

PROFESSORS MARTENS, Mendeléeff, and Minaieff are to attend the jubilee of Edinburgh University, as delegates from the University of St. Petersburg, and Prof. Rokhmaninoff as delegate from the University of Kieff.

THE great gold medal of the Paris Geographical Society has been awarded to the Deep-Sea Expeditions of the *Talisman* and *Travailleur*; a gold medal to M. Arthur Thouar, for his journey across the desert of the Northern Chaco in search of the remains of the Crevaux Expedition; a gold medal to M. Désiré Charnay, for his Central American explorations, and especially his researches in Yucatan.

A MEETING of the Governors of the City and Guilds of London Institute for the Advancement of Technical Education was held last week for the purpose of receiving the Annual Report of the Council. The chair was occupied by the Lord Chancellor. The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the Report, said that the Institution had arrived at a critical point of time, at a point of time at which he might remind them of the progress which things had made, but one, nevertheless, at which it became necessary that they should recognise the importance of proceeding energetically. With respect to the Central Institution, the buildings were nearly completed, and it was expected that the public opening of those buildings might take place in June of this year. It was proposed that four professors should be appointed to the Central Institution—viz. Professors of Chemistry, of Engineering, of Mechanics and Mathematics, and of Physics, the whole being superintended by a Board of Studies. There would be laboratories properly fitted up, and workshops and drawing offices, all with a view to supplying instruction which would combine the elements of those fundamental studies which underlay practical art. It was hoped that, as time went on, the number of exhibitions and scholarships, which would enable poor and meritorious students to obtain the benefits of the Institution, might increase. It was estimated that 9000*l*. a year would be available for the maintenance of the Institution, and that the fees of the students would amount to 2000*l*. That would give 11,000*l*. as an expected present income. When the grant amounted to 10,000*l*., and the students numbered from 150 to 200, paying in fees 5000*l*., the income would be 15,000*l*., and it was estimated that that amount would be required for maintaining the Institute in full working order. Passing from the Central Institution to Finsbury College, the Chairman said that the progress of that branch had been very satisfactory. During the past year it had instructed 799 persons, of whom 100 had been day students and the rest students attending the evening classes. The day students had to pass a preliminary examination in elementary mechanics, and there were six free scholars. The South London School had an attendance of 300 students. The candidates presented for examination this year were 2397, being an increase over the former year of 425, and the passes were 1498, showing an increase over the former year of 276. They came from 104 centres, showing an increase of seven centres; and they were examined, as in the former year, in thirty-seven subjects. What was still more remarkable was the rapid extension of the desire to have the benefit of these examinations, for there were now preparing for them 5862 students, being an increase over those who were under similar preparation in the former year of no less than 1814. He recognised with gratitude the liberality with which they had been supported by the City Guilds and other bodies, and he could not but think that those who had helped them so far would help them still further. Since the report had been written, the Skinners' Company had increased their subscription for the year 1884 from 500*l*. to 1000*l*., and their donation to the building fund from 2000*l*. to 3000*l*.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us the following:—"The new scheme for examinations for admission to Sandhurst which has been agreed upon (it appears) by the War Office and the Civil Service Commissioners must, if unmodified, work serious mischief to scientific education in public schools in which any pro-